



# SAFETY INFORMATION

## Working in Heat

Working in seasonal extreme heat can be extremely uncomfortable for workers, and in some cases it can be outright dangerous!

The recent heatwave experienced in February resulted in extreme temperatures of up to and over 45 degrees.

These temperatures were worse in some worksites due to poor design, and for some operators of forklifts and trucks the temperatures exceeded well over the 50 degree mark. The Victorian Ambulance service struggled to cope with an explosion of call outs to workplaces as a result of workers suffering heat related illness, and the union was inundated with calls for assistance.

Some Union workplaces had a heat policy included in their Union Collective agreements. In those workplaces steps were implemented such as cool drinks, breaks every hour/ half hour in an air conditioned lunch room, and the option of finishing work when the temperature exceeded 36 degrees.

Other workplaces however had little to no heat arrangements in place and some were reliant on a company drafted heat policy that insured workers had to stay at work, no matter how hot the temperature.

**If you want a Union negotiated heat policy on your site contact Jesse Page on 0400 569 727**

### Resources:

ACTU Guideline for working in seasonal heat  
[www.actu.asn.au](http://www.actu.asn.au)

Worksafe Publication "Working in heat",  
[www.workcover.vic.gov.au](http://www.workcover.vic.gov.au)

## Manual Handling

**Weight limits - what are the legal limits for lifting?**

The short answer to this is - "There aren't any".

Part 3.1 (Manual Handling) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (2007)* does not have either weight or maximum force limits.

However, the Regulations require the employer to identify any task which involves hazardous manual handling, and then take actions to either eliminate or reduce the hazard and/or the associated risks. The Regulations include any task requiring the 'application of high force' as hazardous manual handling. The regulations give the following example of "Application of high force":

*"The force required to lift or otherwise handle heavy weights, to push or pull objects that are hard to move, to operate tools that require the use of two hands to exert sufficient force but that are designed for one hand or to operate tools that require squeezing of grips that are wide apart.."*

Basically, this means that *any weight* or force may be a risk to a worker, depending on factors such as posture, frequency, duration, actions and movements, and so on.

Obviously, the greater the force exerted, the greater the risk and workers and OHS Reps should raise this as an issue.

**Info for OHS REPS**  
**[www.ohsrep.org.au](http://www.ohsrep.org.au)**

**WorkSafe Advisory Service**  
**1800 136 089 (toll free)**

## Union workplaces are safer workplaces

Statistically speaking unionized workplaces are safer than non-unionized ones. Is there any wonder why? Unions have the power and ability to enter workplaces on the grounds of OHS and are able to organize and negotiate excellent workplace safety outcomes. It doesn't matter what your safety issue is the Union has the Qualifications, experience, networks and resources needed to assist members resolve their safety concerns, and assist workplaces to become proactive and prevent workplace injury and illness.

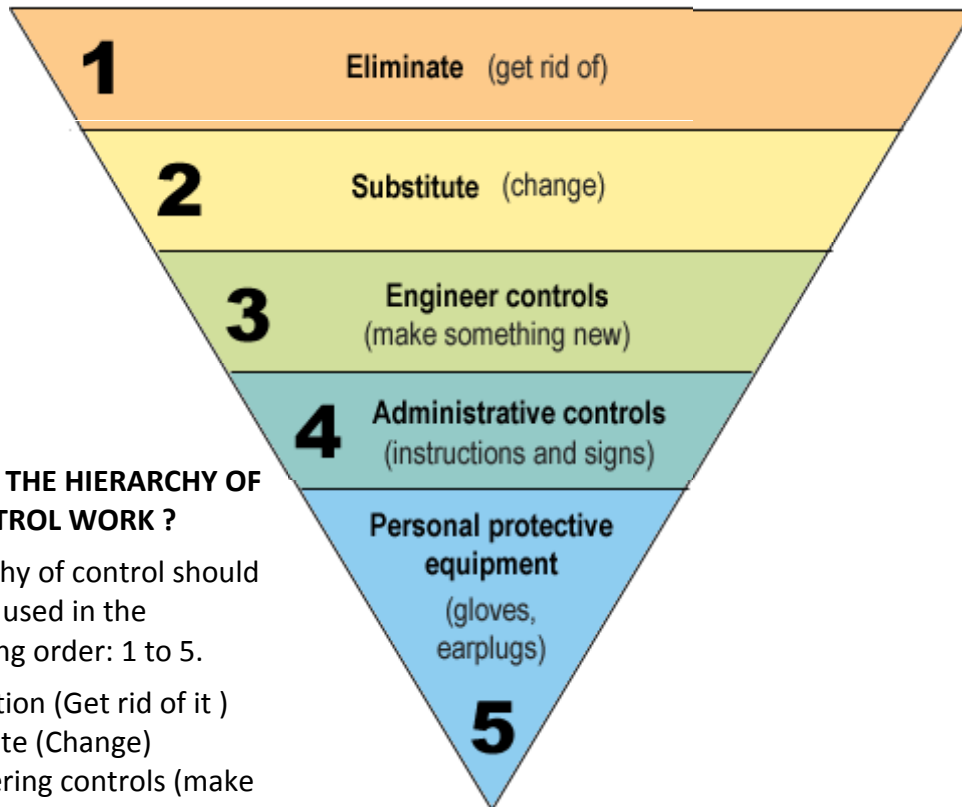
### Speak up! It's OK!

Workers are free to talk to the union about safety issues any time and as a result of the union being on site and easily accessible in locations such as, Lunch rooms, smock sheds and the shop floor, workers are able to confidentially speak to the union about their concerns without being identified for doing so, and know their is protection in the legislation against discrimination, harassment, bullying and violence.

**UNION SAFETY 0400 569 727**

# The hierarchy of control triangle

This tool is used to assess what control measure is sufficient to eliminate or reduce OHS Hazards.



## HOW DOES THE HIERARCHY OF CONTROL WORK ?

The Hierarchy of control should be used in the following order: 1 to 5.

1. Elimination (Get rid of it )
2. Substitute (Change)
3. Engineering controls (make something new)
4. Administrative controls (Instructions and signs)
5. Personal Protective Equipment. Ear plugs masks and glasses.

## MAKE SURE YOUR EMPLOYER DOESN'T TURN IT UPSIDE DOWN!

All too often, employers turn this hierarchy upside down as shown below and this approach endangers workers as it fails to tackle the source of the problem, and instead just deals with some of the symptoms.

